

Watershed Plan Implementation - 2E2SHB 1336

2003 Special Session of the Legislature

Summary of Major Features

1. Creates the framework to implement locally-based watershed plans, and authorizes state funding to support plan implementation. Establishes a matching grant program for Phase 4 – Implementation of up to \$100,000 for each planning unit for 3 years, with a possible 2 year extension.
2. Requires a detailed implementation plan within one year of accepting implementation funds. Each implementation plan must include strategies to provide sufficient water for agriculture, municipal needs, and instream flows; and contain interim milestones, timelines, and specific funding mechanisms to achieve those strategies.
3. The timelines and interim milestones “...must address the planned future use of existing water rights for municipal water supply purposes...that are inchoate, including how these rights will be used to meet the projected future needs identified in the watershed plan, and how the use of these rights will be addressed when implementing instream flow strategies identified in the watershed plan.” (2E2SHB 1338)
4. Requires watershed planning groups to coordinate with other entities planning in the watershed.
5. Allows counties with a small portion of a watershed, or with consent of the other initiating governments, to opt out of watershed planning and leave the planning to other initiating governments.
6. With the consent of the planning unit, allows state agency obligations to a watershed plan to be adopted by policy, procedures or agreements, in lieu of or in addition to rules.
7. Where the Department of Ecology participated in development of an approved watershed plan, the department must rely on the plan as the framework for future water resource management decisions. The department may only amend such a plan through negotiated rulemaking.
8. Permits needed to implement a watershed plan must be identified in the detailed implementation plan. The department shall report annually to the legislature regarding statutory changes needed to enable agency approvals for plan implementation.
9. Requires the Department of Ecology to report annually on the progress in adopting instream flows, as they implement their December 2002 workplan.
10. Planning units are required to provide a match of 10% to receive implementation funding.

(For full text of the bill, go to the Legislature’s web site at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/bills.cfm> and type in the bill number).